

House Republican Press Release

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House Votes Approves Winkler Legislation to Benefit Noank Fire District



HARTFORD-On Thursday, May 26, the House of Representatives unanimously approved legislation introduced by State Representative Lenny Winkler, R-Groton, that would allow the Noank Zoning Commission to establish a village district. House Bill 5785, An Act Concerning Establishment Of Village Districts, now goes to the State Senate for consideration.

Rep. Winkler introduced the bill at the request of Noank Fire District officials. It would allow towns to designate village districts and adopt zoning regulations to protect their distinctive character. The bill extends this authorization to special taxing districts that exercise zoning powers under a special act.

The bill would also allow the Noank Fire District to establish cost-based fees for land use applications. Currently, if any Noank land use board would like a more in-depth study of a development project, it is forced to absorb the cost of the additional research. This legislation would enable a board to pass on such costs to the applicant. An amendment modifying the bill was introduced in conjunction with State Sen. Catherine Cook, R-Mystic.

In 1947, the Noank Fire District received, by special act, the power to zone and maintains many of the separate operating functions of a municipality. However, it cannot avail itself of the majority of preservation-oriented statutes provided to municipalities.

According to Noank Fire District officials, ability to establish a Village District designation is particularly important in Noank Village, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a geographically contained area of mixed residential, village commercial and waterfront uses. At least 85 percent of the structures are of pre-1900 construction and architectural styles.

“This legislation will assist the Noank Fire District in appropriate preservation efforts,” said Rep. Winkler. “Both the ability to adopt zoning regulations and establish cost-based fees for land use applications are particularly important. As applications become more complex, a land use board’s ability to call for professional review of such proposals will benefit the district.”

